

DD/A Registry

79-0101/9

Washington, D.C. 20505

Executive Registry

79-3857/1

The President
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

I take this opportunity to bring to your attention and to ask for your support in solving a problem which I believe could lead to the most dangerous and debilitating exposure in the history of the Central Intelligence Agency.

The problem has been created by the passage last year of the Ethics in Government Act of 1978. As you know, that Act requires all senior officials of the Government to file annually with their agency a detailed personal financial report. The Act further provides that unless exempted by your action copies of such reports, together with a copy of any official position description related thereto, must be given to any person on request anytime within six years from the date the report is filed.

While I understand and support the overall objective of the Act, the portion requiring the public availability of such reports and descriptions can only lead to severe damage to our foreign intelligence capabilities and perhaps even lead to the elimination of the Central Intelligence Agency as a viable foreign operational arm of the Government.

My concerns stem basically from the impact public disclosure of such reports would have in the areas of security, counterintelligence, cover, and foreign relations. Beyond doubt, we will receive requests for these reports as soon as they are filed. They will then be available for the world to peruse including foreign embassies, international terrorist groups and hostile intelligence services bent on rendering the Central Intelligence Agency useless. Such reports and position descriptions would with little effort allow anyone to create a blueprint of the entire superstructure of the Agency. Such a blueprint in hostile hands would inevitably lead to problems, the magnitude of which would eventually destroy much of our foreign intelligence capabilities.

I therefore urge that, in accordance with Section 205(a) of the Act, you find that due to the nature of the office or position of all senior Central Intelligence Agency officials, except the Deputy Director of Central Intelligence and myself, public disclosure of such reports would, by revealing the identity of such individuals and other sensitive data, compromise the national security of the United States. In addition, I urge that you make the appropriate finding which will allow these same individuals to file such additional reports as are necessary to protect their identity from public disclosure.

Mr. President, the importance of this matter cannot be overstated. The very existence of our foreign intelligence capabilities is at stake. With your permission, I will direct my General Counsel to work with members of your staff to frame the appropriate documents.

Yours respectfully,

STANSFIELD TURNER